

Change strategies for blended learning

What change approach will you take?
A roadmap to choose the right approach.

The change concept

Step 1: WHY should things be different?

- **Background.** What is the current situation? Why must this change?
- **Core.** What is the origin or impetus of change?
What seems to be the underlying cause? What level of analysis (depth) is required?
- **Interests:** which interests are affected?
- **Urgency:** how important is the change?

Step 2: WHAT needs to be different?

- **Outcome.** What outcome should the change deliver? What impact do we want to achieve? How ambitious do we want to be?
- **Environment.** Where is this playing out?
How big or small is the group involved?
What change capacities do they have?
What will change in the organisation's environment?
- **Embedding.** Which approaches are controversial in this context? What motivates or demotivates people?

The change concept

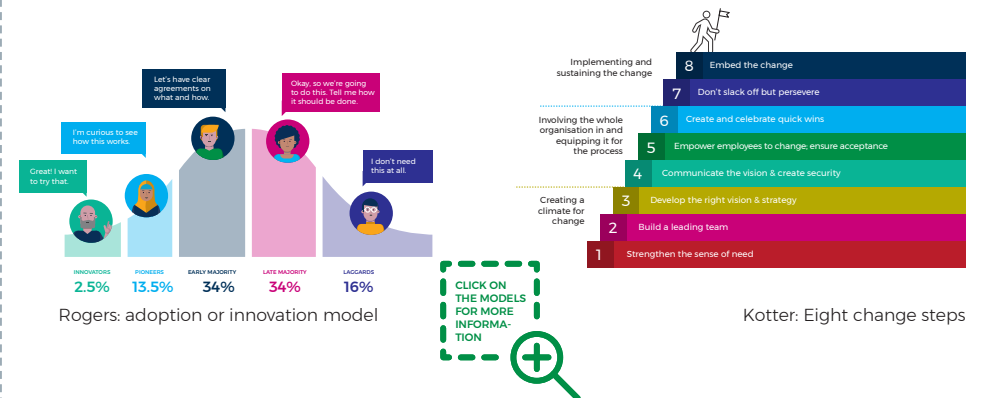
Step 3: WHO are involved in the change?

- **Change agents.** Who will bring about the change? Who will put in the work to understand, design and deliver the change? What are their credentials? And above all, what is their experience and ability, for example, to switch between different strategies when the situation calls for it?
- **Stakeholders.** Who believes something should change?

Step 4: WHAT should the change approach look like, what strategy do you choose?

- **Perspective.** Look at the issue from different perspectives (not just your own preference)
- **Combinations.** Combine different strategies and/or phase them
- **Target group.** Take into account your target group. You will not reach professionals in a knowledge institute with power strategies, for example
- **Effectiveness:** Know what will be effective: [Boonstra](#) has the following to say about the change capacity of different strategies.
- **Communication.** This is aimed at reinforcing collective capacities to change. Every approach requires its own communication strategy. Read more about this [here](#).

Theoretical models



Summary of different change strategies (Spijkerboer, 2020)

- ✓ **Power:** the top of the organisation wants to achieve a goal, creates urgency for it, and directs the approach which is implemented top-down.
- ✓ **Reason:** experts know the best solution. The top initiates and drives the change that is implemented on a project basis.
- ✓ **Negotiation:** stakeholders jointly formulate the best solution and then implement it.
- ✓ **Motivation:** through dialogue sessions, everyone has the opportunity to have a say in the desired change. It is through incentivising and rewarding employees that the change is instituted.
- ✓ **Learning:** through interactive sessions that focus on behaviour, employees' learning capacity is engaged in order to come to a common understanding and start exploring the direction of change.
- ✓ **Dialogue:** everyone is given the opportunity to discover which - new - approaches are the most future-proof. The organisation focuses on removing barriers to this process.

The eight change steps

according to Kotter's model



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Kotter's change model for leading change is based on more than four decades of his observations of countless leaders and organisations as they endeavoured to transform or implement their strategies. Kotter has formulated eight change steps for successful implementation of change in an organisation. Most importantly, the eight change steps (phases) should be taken in a logical order.

1. Strengthen the sense of need

Awareness of the necessity of change among all stakeholders is essential to the process. Why do we need to change and what problems will this solve? Generate energy by eliciting emotions such as hope, confidence, optimism and enthusiasm. Emotions are the driver for change. Kotter asserts that 75 per cent of a company's management must 'buy into' the change to be successful. In other words, you should work hard on Step 1 and spend a lot of time and energy creating urgency before moving on to the next steps. Don't panic and don't jump in too quickly, as you don't want to risk further short-term losses – if you act without proper preparation, you could be in for a bumpy ride.

2. Build a leading team

First who, then what. Leaders should be supported by a group of enthusiastic people from across the organisation. These are people with formal and informal influence, who are well rooted in the organisation and have sufficient critical distance.

3. Develop the right vision and strategy

Make the vision for change concrete, realistic and straightforward. Look for the essence: what is the change about and why does the outside world want it from us (The Why). Look for shared values and underlying assumptions that form the basis for the desired behaviour that will enable the change to come about. Create a plan based on shared goals and desired behaviours.

4. Communicate the vision and create safety

Communicate the vision for change. To reduce uncertainty, fear and distrust, it is important that employees know where they stand. Inform employees about the changes in a clear and credible way. 'Feeling safe' is an important condition for making behaviour negotiable. Management's – crucial – role here is to be vulnerable, transparent and open. That is where the dialogue begins.

5. Empower employees to change, ensure acceptance

Create support for the change. The most important prerequisite is commitment from the top: without unconditional and long-term acceptance, any change is doomed to fail. It is also important to remove barriers that hinder or impede the change process among employees. The effectiveness of the change is the quality of the solution * acceptance within the organisation ($E = Q * A$)

6. Create and celebrate quick wins

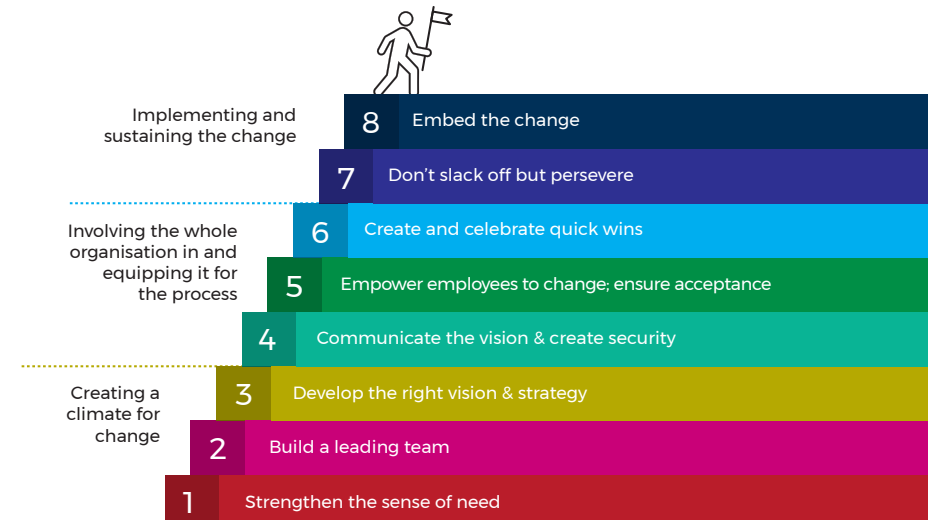
Create quick wins and make these visible to everyone. This creates greater belief in the success of the new vision and strategy.

7. Niet verslappen maar doorzetten

Kotter posits that many change projects fail because victory is declared too early. Real change runs deep. Quick wins are just the beginning of what has to happen to achieve long-term change. After the initial successes it is important that the organisation does not become overconfident and feel that the change process is complete. In this phase, the focus is on pushing the changes through, and adjusting and fine-tuning them. This requires maintaining a sense of urgency. Explore what works, refine the approach and bring these changes to other organisational units. This means looking for a best practice.

8. Embed the change

Ensure perpetuation of the new situation by embedding changes in the organisation. This is mainly about the discipline and perseverance to do things differently and complete them. The embedding is complete when progress on change is measured and evaluated periodically and systematically. This is often neglected and is a major reason why change often gets bogged down. After all, what is not measured is not important enough. In doing so, consider not only the 'hard benefits' such as lead time, quality and costs, but certainly also the 'soft benefits' such as employee satisfaction. Ultimately, it is the employees who make the change a success.



**Eight errors of change management
according to Kotter's model**

Eight errors of change management

according to Kotter's model

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1. Complacency

Perhaps the most important fallacy is that humans will proactively change of their own volition. Change only takes place when everyone in the organisation understands the urgency of the change. Both managers and employees must be on board for change to happen. It begins with leadership. Leadership is at the heart of the model. Many managers are not (or not yet) leaders. This is particularly evident in change processes, where leadership is much more crucial than management.

2. Failure to create a guiding coalition

One of the common errors observed is that the team tasked with leading the change is not up to par. The composition of the guiding coalition, both in terms of quantity and quality, is unsatisfactory. For example, participants do not have decision-making power or are not representative of the organisation. However, you also often see the opposite: the management team is the change team and decides everything for the organisation and its people. In both cases, there will be no or insufficient movement coupled with a lot of resistance.

3. Underestimating the power of the vision

For instance, it is clear that something needs to be done, but people do not know what. Sometimes rumours abound, and whether they are true or not, this creates unrest or panic. According to Kotter, this involves two leadership failures that he categorises under the same heading. These errors are: lack of a clear and inspiring vision and communicating this vision. Perceiving this unrest is synonymous with lack of leadership, for it means that managers are not assuming a leading role. Only one question truly matters here: How do you get people on board with the change?

4. Under-communicating the vision

You hear of a pending change. After that, you hear nothing about it or only meaningless stories. In other words, the vision is under-communicated. This is about the number of communication moments, creativity, an engaging vision and the power of the vision, among other things.

5. Not removing obstacles

Not specifying prerequisites entails the risk that systems, structures and people will block or delay change. Success requires the removal of 'obstacles' or minimising their potential impact. The 'change team' should make sure this is done.

6. Not celebrating quick wins

The focus is on what is not going well or what still needs to be done. People do not see the importance of celebrating quick wins, yet this is an essential element of positive perception.

7. Declaring victory too soon

This is the polar opposite of not celebrating quick wins. Every achievement is celebrated in a big way, with the risk that this leads to backsliding. This can happen if people believe they are already there, and this is more common than you may think.

8. Not firmly embedding changes in the organisational culture

Change has to be embedded in the organisation: the best but also most difficult part of a change process. It is about making the new way of 'how we do things' part of the new organisational culture. According to Kotter, embedding the change gets too little attention.



Differentiation according to Rogers



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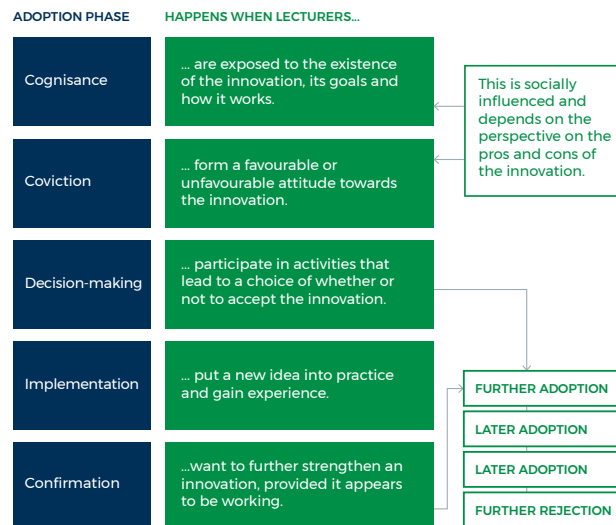
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The implementation and adoption of blended learning across an organisation requires a differentiated approach. After all, not every lecturer is the same. You can model this differentiation according to Rogers' adoption model, which describes the life cycle of an innovation. Rogers identifies five different groups of people who accept or use the product or new idea. The adoption model is also known as Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory.

Stages of adoption among lecturers

Lecturers go through different stages when adopting innovations.



Differentiated support

Studies show that lecturers with different technical and didactic expertise prefer different forms of support.

BEGINNER

- Support from technical and didactic experts
- Student or teaching assistants help with implementation

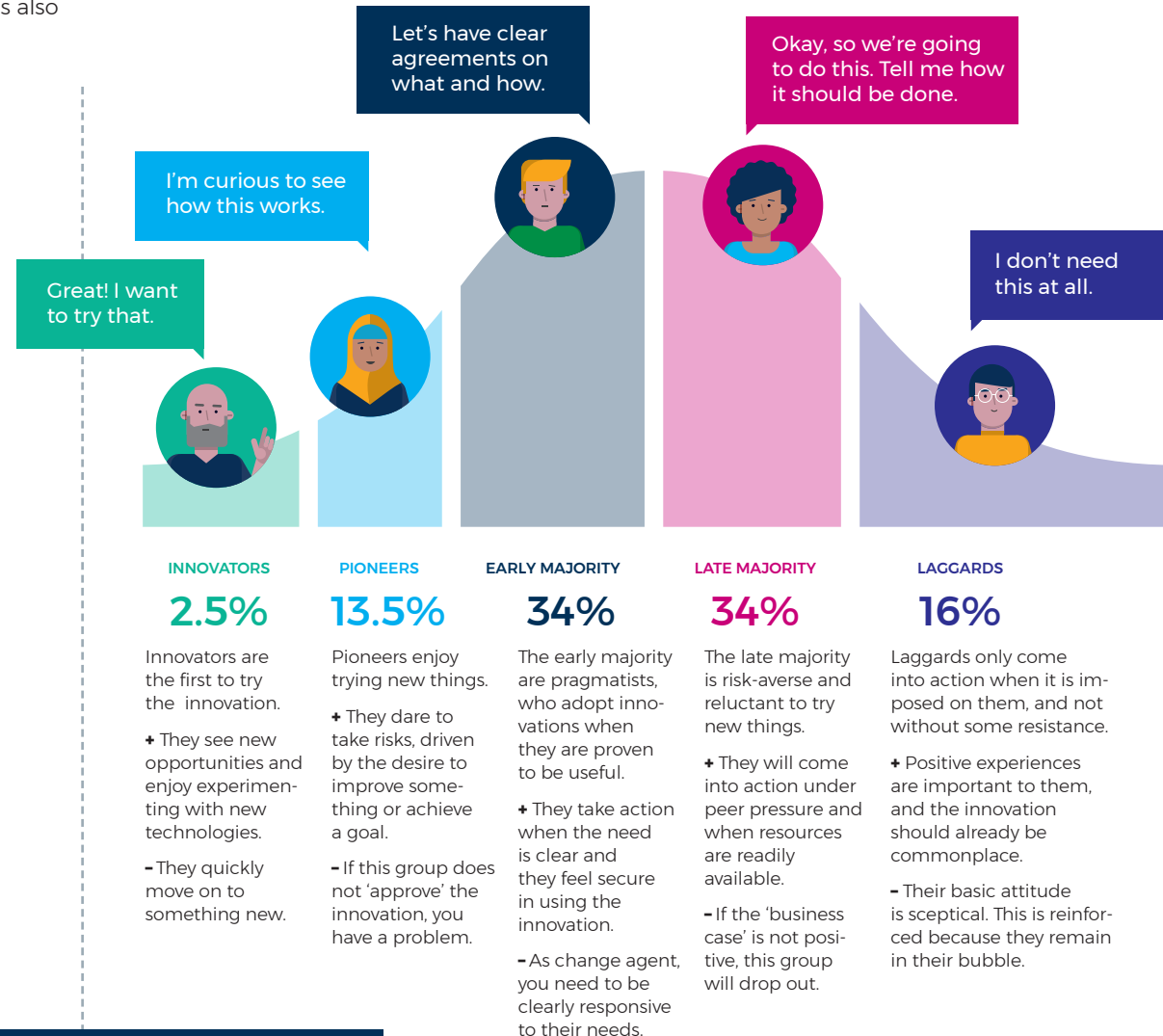
MEDIUM

- Technical assistance
- Training and workshop offerings

EXPERT

- Trial-and-error, experimenting yourself
- Online sources they can navigate on their own

Five groups of users



[Top five opportunities and obstacles](#)

Top five opportunities and obstacles



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TOP 5

Obstacles to the adoption of blended learning:

- ✗ Lack of time to learn how to work with the new technologies and integrate them meaningfully into education.
- ✗ Insufficient expertise to apply technology effectively, appropriate to the intended goals.
- ✗ No understanding of how to effectively evaluate and maintain the use of technology in education.
- ✗ Support is not available in the right form when it is needed.
- ✗ Concerns about unexpected problems in execution, lack of self-confidence.

TOP 5

Opportunities to promote adoption:

- ✓ Sufficient time to design and experiment..
- ✓ Infrastructure is up to standard and user-friendly (both digital and physical, e.g. layout and scheduling of learning spaces).
- ✓ Technical and didactic support is available, just-in-time and appropriate to the level of the lecturers.
- ✓ Clarity on the what and why of blended learning (based on evidence of what works).
- ✓ Educational leadership, working from a clear vision, appropriate support and recognition of the investment (time and resources).

Five groups of users

